The Rationing System

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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NOTES

Field-Marshall Smuts

Field-Marshal Jan Smuts died at Pretoria, South Africa, on September 11. He was 80 and had been ailing for some weeks past. He played a very prominent part in making the history of South Africa for nearly half a century. He was also an able collaborator of Mr Winston Churchill, in the last World War. Gandhiji's *satyágraha* started under his regime. He had to resist General Smuts' policy for a long period and to undergo repeated imprisonments. But ultimately, Smuts became a great admirer and friend of Gandhiji, made peace with him, and remained friendly towards him till the end. It is said that he was as great a philosopher and a farmer as he was a great politician. Gandhiji presented him with a pair of sandals made by himself. He preserved it as a memento. He was an opponent of the present Prime Minister of South Africa — Dr Malan. But I doubt, if there was any radical difference between the views of the two on the fundamentals underlying the racial policy of South Africa. I believe, it was a question of degree rather than one of principles. However, his attitude was more friendly towards the coloured people of that land than that of the present Government. His death will, therefore, be greatly regretted in South Africa by the coloured people there. Personally he was a man of very simple habits, verging on asceticism.

Wardha, 12-9-'50

Misleading Returns

Correspondents have often called my attention to false and misleading returns made by village officers in respect of areas cultivated for particular crops. It appears that official directions to cultivators require them to use 60 per cent of their lands for growing food crops, and 40 per cent for other crops. But as other crops are more profitable in the shape of money-value, most of the cultivators, with the knowledge and connivance of village officers, evade these directions by various methods. They either make a statement which is false from the very beginning, or pretend to sow in the first instance food crops to the required extent, and then after the report is made, uproot the food crops and sow other seeds in their places. The head authorities get reports which do not accord with facts, and their calculations based on paper reports later turn out to be grossly away from the actual produce. Mere provision of severe penalties for making false returns will not do. Punishment might bring a few coins to the Treasury or send a few people into prison for a while at State expense. The main object is to get more food and not more work for magistrates and police and jail officers. The production of food must be assured. Positive ways of stopping evasion and the attempts to do so before it is too late should be devised.

Wardha, 10-9-'50 K. G. M.

Go-Sevaks Wanted

All over India there is a demand for carrying on cattle-breeding work in a scientific manner, but for want of qualified workers it does not progress. To meet this, the Go-Seva Sangh, Wardha, has decided to take twenty-five workers this year for training in the Gopa Vidyalaya. The course will be for a period of 1½ years, the first year being devoted to training in cattle-breeding and the remaining six months to taking practical experience in running a dairy.

The new class will commence from 1st October, 1950. Intending trainees should send their applications before the end of September, 1950. A stipend of Rs 20 per month will be given to each trainee, which will meet the charges for food. No tuition fee is charged.

The qualifications needed for the trainee are that he should be a *khadi*-wearer, must know Hindi and should have the capacity to run an independent dairy; he should also have some knowledge of English and fondness for cattle-breeding and a will to stick to it. He must be prepared to do hard physical labour. Such workers will, after their training, be sent wherever required. As far as possible, efforts will be made to find employment for the trainees in their own provinces.

Pay will vary according to the capacity of the worker, and may range from Rs 75 to Rs 150 per month, including all allowances. The Sangh cannot, at present, undertake to provide employment for every one; but considering the demand

for such workers from all provinces, it is hoped there will be no dearth of employment for qualified workers.

RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ,
Secretary,
Go-Seva Sangh, Gopuri, Wardha

All-India Spinners' Association, Sevagram — Assam Quake Relief Fund

In order to facilitate donors desirous of contributing to the Governor's Assam Quake Relief Fund, in response to the appeals issued by the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of India, all branches and *bhandars* of, or certified by, the All-India Spinners' Association have been instructed to accept donations of hanks of hand-spun yarn or money for this Fund. The price of yarn so received together with cash contributions will be forwarded to the Governor's Fund.

Caution

Donors must *insist* on taking a proper printed receipt from the officer of the branch or *bhandar*, and must satisfy themselves that the branch or *bhandar* belongs to or is certified by the All-India Spinners' Association. Every authorized branch and *bhandar* must bear on its signboard and its receipt books the name *All-India Spinners' Association* (in Indian languages, *Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangha*) in full. In case of doubt, they will consult the list of certified branches and *bhandars* published by the Sangha, and not pay contributions to any not included in that list.

KRISHNADAS GANDHI
Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association

Sevagram, 8-9-'50

CARE OF TEETH

Shri Dinkarrao Desai, Minister for Civil Supplies (Bombay), a few days ago, had offered his own prescription to replace all the tooth-pastes in the world. His prescription was: Three parts of salt and one part of soda-bi-carbonate. All tooth-pastes are waste of public money, according to him. This may or may not be a valid claim, but it reminded me of an article published in the *Reader's Digest*, July 1950 issue, under the caption "How to Lessen Tooth-decay" by Charles W. Freeman. The article is of great importance both from economic and scientific points of view. The writer has recommended some simple rules based upon experience. They are as follows:

(1) Brush your teeth night and morning as usual, using dentifrice or even plain water.

(2) At all other times after eating, or indulging in candy or soft drinks, take a drink of water, and before swallowing it, swish it round in your mouth a few minutes. This need not attract attention and can be done without inconvenience or embarrassment. It will dissolve, if not all, some of the sugar remaining in the mouth and also wash away the acid that already may have formed.

The increase of tooth-decay, according to the writer, is due to the tremendous consumption of sugar. The yearly intake of sugar has increased from 9 pounds per individual in 1824 to 96 pounds in 1948 in U.S.A. Tooth-decay roots mainly in fermentable sugar in food. Some sugar lodges between the hollows of teeth, and rapidly transforms into an acid which attacks the teeth. The action is so sudden that it reaches the peak within 20 to 30 minutes.

The rules recommended by the writer are so simple, and I think were well known to the Indians long long ago. Especially the rule of swishing and rinsing the mouth with simple water immediately after any intake, was so common in olden days that even kiddies were asked to observe this rule strictly, right up from their childhood.

Civilization had its own curses, and the fundamental rules of health and cleanliness are now being observed in their breach. The main preventive agent according to the writer is simple water. This, too, is not being used for swishing and rinsing the mouth after each intake, probably, because, it offends the so-called decorum, dignity, and etiquette.

Will the Indians observe these fundamental rules of cleanliness and prevent tooth-decay and save the waste of public money on unwanted tooth-pastes?

P. G. GOGATE

(*Note*: Dr Chandulal Desai, the well-known dentist of Broach, is strongly of opinion that it is as important to wash the mouth with water *before* taking any food or drink as *after* doing so. Particularly, when one is suffering from pyorrhea or other tooth or mouth ailment, it is necessary to wash the mouth *before* taking food or drink, so that any pus or other deposit may not get mixed with food and enter the stomach. This, too, is in accordance with the traditional training in Hindu families. The rise of modern brushes is not free from danger. They need to be disinfected every day both before and after use; this is rarely done. I have seen them hurriedly washed with a little water and kept in any dusty corner. Users of such brushes have to go to dentists earlier than those who do not use them.

— K. G. M.)

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THE NEW ECONOMY

[The following is addressed to Britain and the Western Powers. The arguments apply with still greater force to India. — K. G. M.]

The economy of the Industrial Revolution is doomed, for already a new economy is rapidly taking its place. The achievement of a reasonably balanced economy and thus of a large measure of self-sufficiency is a national right, a spiritual necessity and in the right order of things. The unbalanced economies of today are the product of greed, and naked power politics have wrought untold economic and spiritual harm and must be superseded by an economy that is based on human need spiritual and economic. It is a nation's right to shape its own destiny, to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of its people in largest measure, and thus to provide the widest possible variety of occupations for the exercise and development of their creative powers.

Britain along with other Western Powers has for over a century battened on the cheap labour of the primary producing countries, and especially of the Far East. That order of things is rapidly coming to a close, which means that the Western Powers must also sooner or later, adopt a reasonably balanced economy.

Soviet Russia was the outcome of a valiant and sincere attempt to find a better way of life for the masses than capitalism had afforded. We now know that it failed in its objective, that Russian Communism lacks many of the spiritual values without which no civilization can abide.

Our job, in fact, is to find that better way of life for which the whole world is looking, and not least the people of Britain. That "way" will place in their right order material and spiritual factors so that both may make their maximum contribution to the achievement of that abundant life which the human soul in its silent and better moments knows to be within man's reach.

Towards a Qualitative Civilization

To take this course would remove the tensions that are the root cause of modern wars, which are now a process of international annihilation, and make possible for the first time in the modern world the pursuit of a qualitative civilization. Our social demands and emphases would undergo rapid change. There would be a demand for a new kind of social unit in which industry dovetailed into agriculture and which was limited in size so that each member could feel he had a responsible place in it, could embrace it in his thought and imagination. Another demand would be for small industrial units, co-operatively controlled, so that personal responsibility and creative opportunity could be experienced by all. This set-up would in turn call for new industrial techniques, the aim of which would be to put machines to their right use which is to assist man in making things of the highest quality and beauty. Not every industry can be decentralized in this way, but very many can. Also inquiry has proved that sixty per cent of industry could provide cheaper commodities under a system of industrial decentralization operating within a regional economy.

Here lies a great new field for the play of the constructive genius within the Co-operative Movement. What is needed is the substitution of a large number of small co-operative productive and distributive units in every area, for the impersonal, over-specialized, over-mechanized and over-centralized industries and commercial organizations of our time. The co-operators of today need to be reminded that the primary objective of all the co-operative pioneers was "an equal society". The issue of economic justice came into the picture, of course, but fully as important was the issue of spiritual equality, which at root means the right of every person to creative opportunity and responsible social living.

This age has quite forgotten that the function of the State and of the machine is to enhance the quality of personal and social life, the State by affording to each person the maximum opportunity of self-expression, and the machine as an aid thereto by taking over the donkey work in the widest sense of the term. To this end the State should see to it that communities are kept small, and that the maximum of economic and political responsibility is placed in their hands. The politics of a community should be derived from its economic life, the organization and control of which should largely rest in the localities, in villages and small towns, organized into regions.

But the most important fact connected with the new economy is that it calls for a change of emphasis in the "standard of living" from money values to creative and other spiritual values. Our money standard of living is going to fall in any case, but that will matter little if we gain in spiritual values; and we shall all be the better for living rather more simply. To this end it is necessary to change the relationship between man and his work. When quality is the aim of production, and responsibility and creative opportunity are the inheritance of the worker, the latter experiences satisfactions that are non-existent in *quantitative*, repetitive industry, and these will lift him above the money values and the low-pleasure levels of the mass man, who is a product of such industry.

Our age has completely failed to realize that to condemn a man to eight hours work a day on the workline is to transform him into a materialist. As such work cannot possibly interest him, let alone satisfy his creative instincts, he works for money only, and increasingly tends to buy all his pleasures with cash. There lies the explanation of the phenomenal growth of mass sport and gambling in recent years, and the decay of home life and religion.

Let the country take warning: mass man, who is the product of industrial robotism which Socialism now supports, will let down democracy in the end. He has already by-passed culture and religion, and in the day of crisis he will bypass democracy. We are well on the road down which Rome went to her doom, for we have overlooked the fact that quantitative mass production for cheapness in order to capture foreign markets, means the production of the mass man and a cheap civilization, and ultimately of the totalitarian State. It is, therefore, clear that economic Socialism is not enough. The final test of Socialism is not the level of men's incomes but the quality of their life. As men labour, so are they.

It thus remains for us to erect the social, economic and political framework in which the rights and values that are necesary to the good life may be the possession of all. This calls for nothing less than the re-building of civilization on new foundations, which are, as I believe, the creative and social values of Christianity. On this foundation each person will be able to find the way of life for himself which is also the way to social amity and international peace. Only when the human person functions as a creative, socially conscious and socially responsible being can there arise a stable and happy society; and only when the nations of the world are free to pursue an economy which enables them to offer to all their citizens the satisfactions of creative living, can there be that international harmony for which mankind looks in vain today. This means that the foundation of personal, social and international well-being is respect for human personality, and the establishment of the social, economic and political conditions in which it can develop to the utmost.

The First Steps to be Taken

The obvious starting point in building the new economy is to launch a bold agricultural policy, in the development of which the assistance of the finest genius in British agriculture, including the best authorities on organic soil culture, and on village development and integration should be solicited. Here also the aim should be to provide a creative, responsible and satisfying life for the agriculturist, and maximum acreage production, both of which can best be achieved by small or family farming. The Labour Government has made a beginning in this direction, but its scheme does no more than touch

the fringe of the problem. If one thing has been made more certain than another by the events of the last thirty years, it is that Britain must grow a very much bigger percentage of her food than she has been in the habit of doing for many decades. The suicidal policy of sacrificing agriculture to manufactured exports, in the mistaken belief that this is to the advantage of the nation, must be abandoned.

WILFRED WELLOCK

(Abridged from *The Third Way*)

HARIJAN

Sept. 23 1950

THE RATIONING SYSTEM

If rationing has to be maintained, means must be devised to so arrange it that normally there should be no temptation to sell or purchase in the black market. Rationing is introduced on the assumption that the stock of the rationed article is very limited ; that if those whose capacity to purchase or consume the article is inordinate are not controlled, they would deplete the market to such an extent as would make it impossible for poorer classes to get even their minimum daily needs. Government would also find it difficult to possess sufficient stocks to meet its own regular and emergency needs.

The difference between the rich and the poor of our country is extremely great. The sentiment of generosity and concern for the needs of the neighbour is either not sufficient or not rationally developed. Some will store enough to last not for a season, but for three or four years ; and they will replenish these stocks as soon as there is a favourable market or an apprehension that prices might go high. There are others who are not ungenerous and selfish in a narrow sense. But their generosity manifests itself in holding luxurious social and religious functions, and in accommodating only their own kith and kin. Consequently, a *prima facie* case is made out for the rationing of articles of primary needs and control of prices of several articles of secondary needs. I confine myself in this article to rationed articles only.

The Government does not claim (except in a certain contingency) to take possession of *all* the stocks of rationed articles by whomsoever held in India. Nor does it bring the entire population of India under the rationing system. It attempts to take under its control only a part of the available stocks and population. I doubt if it is even the largest stockist. The greater portion is held privately either by producers, merchant-stockists or consumer-stockists. This means that the rationing system does not attempt to close private marketing altogether. None of the stockists need the ration card, and can dispense with it, if they are allowed or asked to do so. In cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and the like, a family (which term should include servants, clerks and others dining in a common kitchen) with an average income of, say, Rs 1,800/- a year per head does not need to be rationed by Government. For smaller cities and towns, the figure may be put down at Rs 900/- a year per head. These should shift for themselves, except when overtaken by a calamity.

The rest of the population alone should come under the rationing system. But the rest should include all the rest, and not, as at present, only the city and town people, the armed forces, refugees and the like. That is to say, villagers without land or with insufficient land should also get the benefit of the rationing system. If the object of rationing is to prevent starvation, it should be realized that hunger starts from the village. It is the unemployed and resourceless people of the villages that throng into towns and cities, and make famine and hunger so visible that even the blind may see it. Hence, a system of rationing which overlooks the villager and unnecessarily includes the well-to-do seems to me unsound.

Another drawback of the present rationing system is that its notions of just and equitable distribution are either of mechanical equality or of distribution graded so that the quantity increases in proportion to income. It also vests discretionary powers in superior officers to give extra rations on certain grounds. This leads to corruption, flattery, influence, political manoeuvring and the like.

As matters stand, Government is unable to ration the full daily requirements of the ration-card-holders. At present, in some of the States, it gives only a half of the full needs, and that, too, irregularly. Naturally, therefore, the card-holders are expected to help themselves for the deficit either with substitutes for rationed articles (subsidiary foods, *gur*, *khandsari* etc.), or purchases from the general market. Technically, the general market of rationed articles is regarded as the black market. But there does not appear any sense in condemning the whole of it as such since it is not the aim of the Government to monopolize the possession and sale of the whole of the nation's stock of the rationed articles. It is a black market to the extent it charges more than the prices of these articles at the ration-shop. But a citizen in Bombay, for instance, is not supposed to buy anything outside the ration-shop even at ration-shop prices, and a trader can sell it only clandestinely and at a great risk. The risk itself provides the incentive to charge exorbitant prices. He charges extra price to several hundred customers, so that if he is hauled up on an unfortunate day and has to pay a heavy fine and litigation expenses, he does not, on the whole, stand to lose.

All this dishonesty and secrecy, I believe, can be avoided and trade can be made more honest and open, if there was a system of graded prices in the rationing system. I shall explain this next week.

Wardha, 11-9-'50 K. G. MASHRUWALA

A BLUE-PRINT FOR THE MINISTRY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

One of the critical situations that the country had ever faced is before us today. We may well say that perhaps the outcome from this situation may be even more tragic and wider-spread than that of the Bengal famine of 1943. In view of the serious situation, some good may be done by placing before the public a few suggestions for consideration.

Gandhiji had held the view that the portfolio of Food and Agriculture should be the birthright of the Premier as it provides the very sap for the nation's existence. At any rate it should be given to the strongest man in the Cabinet who has the necessary determination and insight and who can control and co-ordinate all other departments towards a single-minded programme of feeding and clothing the nation. This policy should be entitled to priority over all other considerations. Unless such an important place is assigned to it, it would be futile to hope to solve this problem by tinkering with it, or by organizing nation-wide spectacular stunts.

Within the space at our disposal we cannot give a detailed programme but merely indicate the broad lines on which the question has to be attacked. We shall take them up under different priorities — immediate, short-term and long-term programmes.

Immediate:

The most elementary step is to conserve that which nature produces. All man's actions, which destroy, partly or wholly, nature's gifts should be curbed as being anti-social acts, which should needs be done with a strong hand. Such a programme of conservation will need control of the processing of natural products. Under this programme will come the complete banning of rice and flour mills, sugar factories, and hydrogenation plants. These acts of man destroy the nutritive value without adding any assimilative qualities. They also make the products more expensive and create false values. With food, nutritive value should govern our considerations rather than artificially created so-called aesthetic tastes.

Great attention is due to the methods of preservation, transport and exchange of the produce. For lack of well-built godowns a considerable amount of available food is transferred from the use of man to that of rats and vermin. These two items on the programme should be considered as unpardonable wastes and should be dealt with severely with neither fear nor favour.

In distribution and consumption great care has to be taken to direct food according to the needs of the various sections of the population. Our country has different sections with their own peculiar needs. The poorer masses depend practically altogether on cereals for their diet. These should be allotted a larger quota of cereals than the upper classes who can supplement their food from other sources, such as milk, meat, fish, eggs, vegetables and fruits which are altogether above the reach of a good many of the producers. The rationing system in India cannot blindly follow the methods adopted in foreign countries which are accustomed to a variegated diet of a higher order.

Attempting to change the eating habits of the people radically without creating a necessary background of a knowledge of dietetics can only make a laughing stock of the persons involved. Given a little time it may be possible to make those who eat raw rice to take to par-boiled rice to prevent the evil effects of polishing. But to ask people to take immediately to eating cotton-seed-oil cakes will be to make our schemes ridiculous.

If we are to supplement our present supplies by imports it will be necessary to earmark our dollars or foreign exchnge for obtaining food and primary needs. Until the threatening famine conditions are averted foreign exchange available at the moment should not be diverted to obtaining expensive machinery and other costly equipments for large-scale production of luxury goods. These items cited above will form our 'first-aid'.

Short-term:

We now come to certain steps that may be looked upon as our short-term programme. This will include offering inducement to the producers by not making an undue claim on their production. Procurement schemes should exempt all small producers who cannot produce more than what will leave them an excess over 16 oz. per head per day for a cereal-based diet. The present procurement plan is extremely oppressive on the small producers and, as it operates, the larger producers manage to escape. This directs the excess production into the black market and creates a breeding ground for wholesale corruption.

The programme of increasing the military power and the unprecedented influx of displaced persons from Pakistan have increased the pressure from the parasitic sector of the population. This burden can only be lightened by inducing a great many of this sector to become producers. The Military, excepting during manoeuvres or during active operations, should be made to produce bulk of their food needs. Many of the young recruits hail from rural areas and are acquainted with agricultural processes. They can be switched over to occupy themselves with food production during the agricultural season. This programme will also be useful to introduce improved and modern methods into agriculture. The military camps may be located on marginal cultivable lands which can be improved by mechanized methods of dealing with such lands, thus adding to the extent of soil under cultivation. Similarly, the displaced persons may be given the responsibility of feeding themselves to a great extent and converting themselves into producers rather than remain parasites as middlemen. They should not be permitted to deal in foreign goods, as they are being encouraged to do at present, by providing them with stalls etc. in all big cities.

Very careful combing out of all land under commercial crops must be undertaken. While people are starving there can be no excuse whatsoever advanced towards cultivating money-crops such as Virginia tobacco. Arguments advanced today about the extent of acreage under such crops being small can hold no water in a famine-threatened land.

Long-Range:

To increase production, great many steps may be taken with a long-range programme. To enumerate a few, tanks may be repaired, rivers may be harnessed to exploit every drop of water they carry, erosion may be minimized by a scheme of bunding and tree-planting, afforestation may be undertaken and contour bunding may be resorted to.

The present expensive but fruitless agricultural experiments may be directed towards production of improved seeds and supplying these on a large scale to actual cultivators.

The Agricultural Colleges with their research sections should be looked upon as an insurance against famine and food-shortage. The highly paid staff should be conscious of the fact that the responsibility will be theirs for any shortage of food and that they will be readily liquidated if they fail to justify their existence by satisfactorily dealing with any threat of a shortage to the food supply of the people. They should not rest content purely with laboratory experiments or carrying out their field work even on a commercial scale. It should be their duty to see that their findings reach out to the farthest farms in the interior. Our Agricultural Department has to concentrate on their extension work and take upon themselves the duty of seeing that the most illiterate farmers are posted up with the latest achievements of science by a network of demonstration farms which will carry light and leading throughout the land.

Cattle-Breeding:

The pivot of all economic activity especially in the agricultural sector is the bullock. It is used in the field operations for lifting water, for thrashing and for transport. The cow not only yields milk and provides bullocks

but it also is a fertilizer-factory. The dung and the urine of cattle form to a large extent the main part of the manure that is used to restore soil fertility. By a long period of neglect and during the occupation of our land by the foreign military forces our cattle wealth has been considerably depleted. The situation requires a strenuous effort on the part of the Government and those interested in the welfare of cattle to at least reinstate the quality and numbers of our animals to our former strength.

Agricultural Prices:

One of the commonest slogans that passes current today both amongst the learned and the unsophisticated is "agriculture does not pay". Agriculture is the one industry that produces wealth. Most other industries are mainly concerned with transforming materials into consumption goods. If the latter type of industry can be made to pay, there must be some leakage of a serious kind to make an occupation which produces 50, 60 or hundredfold a losing one. One can easily see that the cause of it is the large number of non-producing middlemen who act as parasites on this sector and a faulty calculation of prices not based on actual costs at which the products exchange. This state of affairs calls for immediate researches being undertaken to find out the actual costs of agricultural production on a basis other than money and helping the exchange of goods so that the producer may get a square deal.

These few suggestions are not beyond the practicability of the Government of a country which claims to be independent. We hope therefore that the persons responsible will not throw out any excuses but will put their shoulder to the wheel and bring hope and salvation to our land.

(*Abridged*) J. C. KUMARAPPA

ASSAM EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND

From 11-9-'50 to 16-9-'50

Name & Place	Rs	as	ps
Shree Sohanlal, Beawar	46	0	0
Shree Kamalabehn Patel, Belgaum	40	0	0
Shree Jatashanker Devshanker Bhatt, Yeotmal (Berar)	5	0	0
Shree Narsinhbhai Velji, Yeotmal (Berar)	5	0	0
Shree Prataplal Manilal, Yeotmal (Berar)	5	0	0
Shree Ratilal Brothers, Yeotmal (Berar)	5	0	0
Shree Damji Bhanji Vaghela, Yeotmal (Berar)	5	0	0
Shree Ashabhai Mathurbhai Patel, Harij	5	0	0
Shree R. J. Dave, Bombay	5	0	0
Shree R. S. Joshi, Satara	5	0	0
Shree K. Pattabhi Ramaiyya, Kolar	2	0	0
Shree Manigauri Ratilal Shah through Navajivan Karyalaya, Indore Branch, Indore	11	0	0
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Shree Dahyabhai Sakalchand Patel, Ahmedabad	5	0	0
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Shree Velari Jesingh Mava Thakkar, Chorwad	4	0	0
Shree V. Venkata Subbulu, Lakshmapuram	5	0	0
Shree V. Govindarajalu, Lakshmapuram	5	0	0
Shree Laxmi Saw Mills, Belur	500	0	0
Shree Jumakhlal Malukchand Shah, Cutch Mandvi	200	0	0
Shree Damodardas Sanghvi, Calcutta	100	0	0
Shree Muljibhai Laxmidas, Kamrol	10	0	0
Shree Sadashiv R. Sabnis, Janjira Murud	5	0	0
Shree N. R. Atre, Dombivali	1	0	0
Shree Narottamdas Amarchand, Bombay	300	0	0
Dr R. T. Datar, Poona	75	0	0
Shree Dahyabhai Shankarji Desai, Kolhapur	125	0	0
Shree Himatlal K. Shah, Ahmedabad	5	0	0
Shree Girdharilal Gandhi, Rajnandagaum	50	0	0
Shree M. V. Bhadraiah, Lallaguda	25	0	0
Shree Shantaram Vinayak Nadkarni, Bombay	5	0	0
Sum already acknowledged	2,467	12	6
Total	4,087	12	6

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN COTTON

II

Cotton plants may be classed under two heads, according to their longevity, as annual (*Gossypium herbaccum*) and perennial (*Gossypium arboreum*). The first lasts only for a year, is grown in fields and bears fruit during the season. It can grow only in selected areas, requires big-scale cultivation and considerable labour. Every soil and climate has its peculiar variety which does not thrive in another soil or climate. The other has a long life of several years. It grows in the courtyard of a house in any part of the country. It grows into a tree and continues to yield fruit for many years. The distinction of this class of cotton consists in its capacity to grow in every place irrespective of climate. It does not require a great amount of money, land, labour, skill or knowledge. With a little tending, it gives decent return. Certain varieties of this class possess a tough fibre which makes for durable cloth. The fibre is also long so that it can be used for manufacturing fine cloth. Or, one may double the fine thread and easily weave one's own cloth and attain self-sufficiency. It is not hampered by transport difficulties. It does away with the middleman as also with the customer. The producer himself can convert his raw cotton into manufactured cloth at his leisure. Thus it makes a clean sweep at one stroke of the economic class distinctions obtaining between the producer, the middleman and the purchaser, and the artificial but nevertheless real bondage of money. With handy implements like the sickle and the pick-axe the farmer reaps a rich material and spiritual harvest, health, wealth, love and beauty. If we could only increase its cultivation the drain on the Dollar Reserve consequent on our import of cotton will diminish considerably. It also obviates the fear of reduction in the output of crop or the lessening of the percentage of ginned cotton which the adoption of the cultivation of long-fibre cotton is likely to lead to on account of the fragility of its fibre. On a proper apprizal of all the points referred to above we arrive at the conclusion that the cultivation of tree-cotton in the space within the compound of our house will alone lead us to the solution of the cotton-problem.

One of the varieties of this cotton is known in our country by such different names as *dev-kapas* (देवकपास), *nandanvan* (नंदनवन), *jata* (जटा), *jura* (जुडा), *veni* (वेणी), *kidni* (किडनी), etc. Its seeds are found stuck to one another. Those of other varieties are not so connected, but lie dispersed in the fruit. But all have one thing in common — they do not have filaments on the seed. The seed is black. The other varieties are *narma* (नरमा), *hemati* (हेमती), *vamani* (वामनी) and *svarnalata* (स्वर्णलता). Both the varieties have been brought to India from outside. There is a third variety, which is indigenous. Its seed is distinguished by its hairy

coating; it has several sub-varieties bearing white, yellow and red flowers. They are known as *hiravni* (हिरवणी), *pamidipatti* (पामिडीपट्टी), *kondapatti*, (कोण्डापट्टी), *nadam* (नाडम), *gajjar* (गज्जर), etc. Hybrid varieties of *devkapas* have also been produced. Their seeds differ from the pure one by their hairiness. Some coloured cotton has also been grown.

The plant of the tree-cotton grows from 6 feet to 15 feet high. It gives a good crop for 6 to 8 years. The crop in the first year is not much, but it goes on increasing for the next three years. In the fifth and sixth years it maintains its level, whereafter it dwindles and falls considerably low in the eighth. If the new seed is sown in the seventh year, it will begin to yield a good crop in two years when the old tree should be rooted out. If proper tending, watering and manuring are done it may continue to give its yield for a longer time. It gives two crops in a year, the first in the months of April and May and the other in October and November. It is immune from 'stem weevil' which usually attacks the ordinary annual crop, but it is the breeding ground for another kind of insect 'bole-weevil', which feeds on it. When elsewhere it does not get anything to eat, this saffron-coloured insect repairs to this tree and thrives there and injures not only this particular tree, but other crops also later on. Therefore a month after the summer crop, it had better be pruned. Soon after the crop is over, watering should be stopped. And then, the three lower branches along with 9 inches of three sub-branches of each of these should be preserved and the rest should be pruned. All the earth round about the tree except within a circle of almost 9 inches round about the foot of the trunk should be filled with manure and given water once or twice before monsoon.

The fibre of this cotton is 1 inch to 2.5 inches long and gives a thread of 30 to 300 counts. The seed is sewn towards the beginning of the rainy season. Pits, 2' × 2' × 2', are dug, and if the soil is poor, they are filled with manure made up of equal quantities of cow-dung, urines, compost, night-soil-manure, bone-powder, ash, oil-cake etc. and common earth. They should be 6 feet to 8 feet apart from one another depending upon the quality of the soil. Two seeds may be put in every pit, 3 inches apart from each other, and half an inch below the surface. A month after the seeds have sprouted, the one which is stronger should be retained and the other plant should be rooted out. The earth around should be kept soft and weeds should be constantly removed. There is no need to water the trees after the rains. But the crop is richer if the tree is watered once every month in winter and twice every month in summer. Before the seed is sown, it should be kept in the sun for three days, or be submerged in sulphurated water on the previous night. This will make the tree more immune from disease. A kind of beetle, brown, green or black in colour, perches itself on the leaves of the growing plant and eats them. It should be destroyed and the tree dusted with ash. In winter, the bud is pestered by red-coloured round insects. The best way to destroy them is to prepare a mixture of kerosene oil and tobacco solution and to shake them into a tinful of it. This will prevent the cotton filaments from becoming weak, withered and discoloured. The ginning can be easily done on either the ginning board and rod or the ginning wheel. Since this cotton has a long fibre, the carding should be done either after the *patushali* manner prevalent in Andhra, or the *kapasia* manner of Bihar, or on a carding bow with a loosely tied gut. The *patti-tunai* is more suitable for cotton with long fibres. The Andhra and Bihar methods will be useful also for spinning. These methods have to be learnt from some one. This is not, however, to suggest that this cotton cannot be spun on the ordinary spinning wheel. The fine-thread spinners will earn to use it with the same ease as they do ginned cotton, with a little practice, of course. The *patti-tunai* is easy to learn for all.

The suggestion to use the pick-axe in the cultivation of this cotton, might invite ridicule in this age of the machine and technological advancement. But it may be recalled that during the last war when England was besieged by Hitler's blockade and suffered from scarcity of food, the people of Britain had taken to this seemingly puny tool and successfully saved the country from starvation. Ever since it has become a part of their national character to raise in the open space within the enclosure of the house a small garden of fruits and flowers and edible roots. It may be mentioned here that Gandhiji insisted on hand-labour for agricultural work in his *ashram* at Phoenix in South Africa. Formerly the house-garden was a normal feature of people's life. Tulsidas refers to such gardens in his description of Ayodhya. They destroy filth by absorbing the refuse of the house and drain-water, add to the beauty of the surroundings, make for health, pay materially and denote clean and refined tastes. Today, more than ever, India needs these green spots inside every home, bright with fruits and flowers. They may also lead to substantial improvement in our agriculture if only people would proceed to do the job scientifically, with an observant eye, in the spirit of research.

The A.I.S.A. has distributed the seeds of this variety to some individuals and institutions interested in this work. They are requested to keep a detailed account of their experiments; a table with the name of the place at the head, showing monthly growth, disease, yield of

cotton, the quantity of ginned cotton and the seeds, the length of the fibre, the count of the thread spun therefrom etc. They should submit their reports regularly so that we may know what variety of it will suit which place, and which one will be most useful. This will facilitate our work of co-ordinating these various experiments and help us to arrive at the right conclusion from the point of view of self-sufficiency.

Sevagram, 13-7-'50 DADABHAI NAIK

(Translated from Hindi)

LEPROSY AND HEREDITY

On page 218 of *Harijan*, August 26, 1950, the following passage occurs in Sitaram's article "Prahlada, the Father of Nai Talim":

> "Marriage is a sacrament and trust. It demands that we should bring forth only good children. Personally I may do little damage by being bad. But if my children and their children are bad, they are capable of doing greater harm to the world. It is said that till the seventh generation children acquire the character and defects of their ancestors. Take for example the case of leprosy: it remains and leaves traces till the seventh generation. That is why Gandhiji advocated *brahmacharya*."

The writer unfortunately emphasizes two harmfully erroneous notions regarding leprosy: (1) that it is hereditary and (2) that it has a moral stigma. It is *not true* that "leprosy remains and leaves traces till the seventh generation." In fact, if the children of leprosy patients were protected from close and prolonged contact with their infective parent, they do not contact the disease. Where the disease is passed on to a member of a succeeding generation, it is through contact, *not by heredity*. This is seen by the fact that when children move closely with patients who are not their parents, they are liable to get the disease. Shri Sitaram's reference to leprosy is very unfortunate since, besides giving currency to an erroneous notion of leprosy, it also mentions leprosy in a context which emphasizes the stigma against leprosy. Gandhiji advocated the removal of our common ignorance about leprosy and the unjust stigma against it. Those who would remind us of what Gandhiji advocated in one particular or other should not forget what he advocated about some other particular.

Finally, let me say that it is specially unfortunate that the passage in question should appear in *Harijan*.

T. N. JAGADISAN

(*Note*: I gladly publish the above. Modern science is emphatically and, we are told, unanimously of opinion that leprosy is not a hereditary disease. Hansen, the Norwegian discoverer of the leprosy bacillus, put forth this view about a hundred years ago, and it is said to have stood the test of time.

Leprosy is not also, like, say, venereal disease, associated with immoral conduct. To look upon the victim of this disease with the suspicion that he must have been guilty of some moral lapse is doubly unjust to him, and adds to his misfortune. Like a patient of tuberculosis or cancer, he needs our sympathy and care. It is less contagious than tuberculosis.

So much for correcting the impression that might have been created by the reference to the disease by Shri Sitaram. At the same time, it may be mentioned that Shri Sitaram's reference was just casual in the course of a different topic. I would also say that the fact that leprosy is not hereditary does not diminish the importance of *brahmacharya* to its patients; and this Shri Sitaram lays stress upon. In the present condition of our society, it is very difficult to segregate the children of leprosy-victims from their patients, which is imperatively necessary for their protection. The possibility of the children contacting the disease is so great that there is no wonder that the disease has been regarded hereditary. Besides, there are other factors to be considered. Though the disease may not be directly inherited, it is not certain that those tendencies, which make a person susceptible to receiving its contagion, may not be inherited. Take for instance, asthma. It is not regarded as a germ disease at all. But you do not come across a doctor or a *vaidya* who does not ask the patient, whether his parents or grandparents had it. He asks that question because it is found to run in families. It may be due to inheritance of similar formation of lungs, nose, digestive apparatus, bloodcells etc. The *disease* itself may not be hereditary, but the *soil* congenial for it may be.

Shri Sitaram gives the belief of *Ayurveda*, and it may be erroneous. Nevertheless, his main advice, namely, its patients should practise *brahmacharya*, is sound.

Wardha, 6-9-'50 K. G. M.)

CONTENTS PAGE

CARE OF TEETH ... P. G. GOGATE 250
THE NEW ECONOMY ... WILFRED WELLOCK 251
THE RATIONING SYSTEM... K. G. MASHRUWALA 252
A BLUE-PRINT FOR THE MINISTRY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ... J. C. KUMARAPPA 253
ASSAM EARTHQUAKE RELIEF FUND ... 254
SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN COTTON — II ... DADABHAI NAIK 254
LEPROSY AND HEREDITY ... T. N. JAGADISAN 256
NOTES:
FIELD-MARSHAL SMUTS ... K. G. M. 249
MISLEADING RETURNS ... K. G. M. 249
GO-SEVAKS WANTED ... RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ 249
A. I. S. A.— ASSAM QUAKE RELIEF FUND ... KRISHNADAS GANDHI 250

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